

References

So you want Mr. K to write you a reference.

Steps:

1. Ask me if I will write you a reference. In your request you need to provide the following information: Where are you applying? Does it use the common application? What is the deadline? I prefer one month notice; if I get too many requests near the deadline I may decline yours. If I think you don't have a chance, I will decline.
2. If I say yes, remind me of the following in an e-mail:
How long have we worked together and in what capacity?
What were your results on physics contests, position in physics club and performance on teams that I coached/sponsored so that I can double check my records.
Anything special you think I should include in my reference. Remind me of a particular incident in class or in your extended essay/IA that you found memorable, for example.
3. It is standard to waive your right to see the recommendation after you matriculate. I don't want to deal with students complaining. If you don't trust me to give a good reference, don't ask.
4. If you don't get a confirmation e-mail that I completed my reference with 2 weeks left before the deadline, give me a polite reminder.
5. When you get the confirmation, thank me. A gesture like a hand drawn card is nice.
6. Let me know when you get accepted or declined, e-mail is fine. It will help me with advising future students about their chances at particular Institutions.
7. Recite the pledge of allegiance to the US flag and hand over your touque and maple syrup.
8. Thank me in your Nobel Prize speech.

Good luck!